



Za'atari refugee camp, home to over 80,000 refugees



Photo credit: Malcolm Fleming



**Equipping churches in Jordan to reach out to refugees**  
By Malcolm Fleming

The Bible is full of God's concern for the marginalised. This was the heart of Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4, and it's the theme of this newsletter.



When I hear stories of lives changed through the Bible it blows me away, and all thanks to your *Bible a Month* gifts. Refugees in Jordan, deaf children in Swaziland and persecuted Christians in Morocco are receiving love and the Gospel because of your generosity. Read on to see how you're making a difference...

*Tom Newbold*  
**Tom Newbold**  
Bible a Month Co-ordinator

Stepping off the main street in Zarqa, I follow a local pastor into a shadowy alleyway. The constant sound of drilling reverberates off the stone walls and the noise is hardly deadened as we enter the block where Omar and Leen\* live in a tiny apartment.

The pastor introduces me and explains that Omar and Leen used to be farmers in Syria. Afraid for their children's safety, they fled when their village fell under siege from both the Syrian regime and the rebels.

Despite the cramped space, I learn that they are grateful for this haven. When they first arrived in Jordan they found themselves in Za'atari refugee camp, living in one room and sharing a bathroom with 12 other families. There was no privacy and conditions were squalid.

They greet the pastor joyfully. He is the head of an amazing local organisation which works in partnership with our team

in Jordan. They visit refugee families to deliver much needed provisions and listen to them as they share their experiences.

Omar and Leen had no knowledge of the Christian faith until the pastor visited them. But now they are believers.

They were in desperate need after they left the Za'atari refugee camp. When they saw an advertisement in the local paper offering help to anyone who needed it they got in touch straight away.

'We deliver a box each month with basic food such as oil, rice and lentils because we want to show God's love to those who are suffering persecution,' the pastor explained.

'It's the mercy and love in the Bible that speaks to me,' said Omar. I listened to the raw emotion in his voice as he told us of his 76-year-old father who accidentally broke a curfew in Syria. He was just looking for some bread but he was killed.

# In focus

## Remembrance Sunday

The nation will fall silent for two minutes on 11 November, as we remember those who died in war.

This year is particularly significant, as it marks the centenary of the end of World War One: a war in which some 8.5 million soldiers from across Europe were killed.

As well as looking backwards, Remembrance Sunday gives us a chance to reflect on what the Bible says about peace, and how that can touch our lives today.

We'll be joining with other Christian organisations to mark 100 Days of Prayer. From 4 August, you too can join with the prayers of thousands of others across the country.

Then, if you are planning a Remembrance event in your community, check out our special Remembrance Sunday order of service. It's based on the wonderful verses from Revelation 21.3-5, 'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'



Finally, you may be interested in *Hear My Cry* an illustrated collection of psalms, poems, prayers and stories – a fantastic aid to reflection on World War One.

To find out more, visit:  
[biblesociety.org.uk/worldwar1](http://biblesociety.org.uk/worldwar1);  
[remembrance100.co.uk](http://remembrance100.co.uk)



Photo credit: Laura Goodsell

I'm struck by the relationship the pastor has built with Omar and Leen. They can't read or write so he tells them Bible stories each time he visits. Their hunger for these stories is palpable and their favourite is about Lazarus being raised from the dead.

Reading Jesus' words to Martha in John 11.25-26 I'm incredibly moved. 'I am the one who raises the dead to life! Everyone who has faith in me will live, even if they die. And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never really die. Do you believe this?'

Despite everything Omar and Leen have been through, I see the hope they find in these verses. Even more inspiring is their response to Jesus, like Martha's in verse 27, 'Yes, Lord ... I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God. You are the one we hoped would come into the world.' Wow!

It's also amazing to see God's love in action through the local church. Omar has a slipped disc and is unable to work. But, with the pastor's help, Leen has been able to find work as a housekeeper for some Christian families.



A street in Zarqa.

And it's thanks to your generous gifts that we can provide local churches and organisations with the Bibles and essential provisions that empower them to do outreach work. Together God is using us to pour out his love and transform the lives of people in the most desperate situations.

Please pray for the pastor and those he works with as they continue to show God's love in practical ways. And let's not forget to pray for the thousands of other refugees still in desperate need.

\*Names have been changed to protect those involved

## The power of God's love displayed in practical ways

Despite national statistics indicating that in Swaziland 18-20% of people live with hearing disabilities, including an estimated 60,000 profoundly deaf people, there is currently only one school for deaf children in the whole country. Furthermore, sign language is not even counted as an official language.

Our team in Swaziland has made it their mission to reach this neglected community and ensure they too can access and understand the word of God. They have been working with the Siteki School for the Deaf since 2009 and thanks to your *Bible a Month* gifts they are in the process of painstakingly translating 132 Bible stories into sign language.

In May, a group from England and Wales went to the school to inspire the children and encourage the teachers. When they arrived it was clear that the teachers were exhausted. All of the children in their care are profoundly deaf, and many have additional needs.

On top of their teaching, the job of translating the Bible stories falls to just three sign language interpreters and when resources are stretched their progress slows. Please pray their energy will be renewed and they will have the time they need to work on the project.

There's no doubt their hard work is having a real impact. The children were warm and enthusiastic, keen to retell the Bible stories they had learned. Their expressive faces and deftly moving hands showed a depth of understanding that was truly inspiring.

The most moving moment of the visit was when our group shared with the children through an interpreter just how much God loves them. And, with winter fast approaching, woolly hats and gloves were handed out personally to each child and teacher. They were so grateful and excited they continued to wear them for the rest of the visit!

Praise God that we're able to demonstrate his love in practical ways and pray that the Bible story translations will transform lives as the deaf community receives God's word in their heart language.



Staff and students at Siteki School for the Deaf proudly display their new hats and gloves.

Photo credit: Ken Ditch

# Jordan

August 2018

Jordan is often described as an 'oasis of peace in the Middle East, surrounded by a circle of fire'. It supports freedom of religion and the Jordanian Royal Family are openly supportive of Christianity. Nevertheless, Christians are under pressure making up just 2.2% of the population of 10.2 million.

Last year, our team in Jordan pulled off the first ever Christian festival to take place in the country – bringing together 10,000 Christians over two days from every single one of the 12 denominations in Jordan. All 12 leaders came together, on stage, to confess their unity, in humility, under Christ.

The festival is called 'Watad,' meaning tent-peg. The peg may be small but the tent can't stand without it and the harder you beat it, the deeper it goes and the more secure the tent becomes.

One of our team's key objectives in Jordan is to strengthen Christian witness, encouraging the Christian community to remain and to reach out and bless their local community. Watad was a wonderful example of this.



Thousands of Christians gathered together for the Watad festival.

## Prayer pointers

- Praise God for last year's Watad festival and ask him to continue building and encouraging the Christian community in Jordan.
- Pray for our team in Jordan as they work to share the light of the gospel in Jordan and the Middle East.
- Ask God to work powerfully through the marriage counselling offered by our team in Jordan. May this help to draw families together and protect vulnerable women and children.
- Thank God for the Jordanian Royal Family and their support of religious freedom. Pray that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the freedom of Christians to meet and worship God in Jordan would not only be protected but would increase.

# Morocco

September 2018

Morocco: it's a country where giving someone a Bible could land you in prison, where openly going to church can mean you lose your job, and where believers are even killed for their faith.

In 2010, dozens of foreign missionaries were expelled from the country in a government crackdown, and Christians came under increasing pressure. But since then, the Church has been growing – and it's an indigenous, local Church fuelled by the provision of Scripture in Morocco's everyday language.

Back in 2012, the first Moroccan Arabic New Testament was published, printed and made available online. Now, five translators are working on the full Bible and are on track to see the first Moroccan Arabic Bible published in 2021.

Today, it's thought there are up to 40,000 Christians in Morocco. Some say there are tens of thousands of additional believers who keep their faith a secret for fear of repercussions. Our team receive around 100 requests a week from people who want a Bible.



## Prayer pointers

- Praise God for his faithfulness in drawing Moroccan people to him. May the Church continue to grow and may God bless the work of those discipling new Christians.
- Pray for Moroccan Christians who deal with fear and insecurity on a daily basis. Pray that God will strengthen the faith of those who are arrested and protect them in prison.
- Thank God for the translation team, who have been working on the Moroccan Arabic Bible since 1999. Pray for energy and stamina for them in these final years of the task.
- Ask God to protect our team in Morocco, and give them wisdom and discernment as they negotiate the challenges of the culture.

# Jordan

*'I rely on your constant love; I will be glad, because you will rescue me. I will sing to you, O LORD, because you have been good to me.'*

Psalm 13.5-6 (GNB)

## Factfile



Area – 89,342 sq km, approx. 37% of UK

Population – 10.2 million, approx. 16% of UK

Literacy rate – 95.4%

Languages – Arabic (official), English (widely understood among upper and middle classes)

# Your Stories

Your responses to our *Pass it on* campaign are still flooding in! It's a privilege to read them. We hope you find this example of God speaking directly into a situation through his word as inspiring as we do.

### Colin from Tavistock

*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1.6 (ESV)*

'I was a young Christian when this verse was given to me – as I believe – by the Holy Spirit himself, since I did not know him before the event.

I was on my way to an evening meeting at a local church, but in such a turmoil of mind and spirit that I could not enter the building. It would take too long to go into detail, but I was in despair, believing God was requiring something of me that literally terrified me, so I felt a failure because I could not respond.

I now know it was an enemy attack! I stood beneath a street lamp and cried to God for help. I opened my pocket Testament at random and the light from the street lamp illuminated this verse. The relief was immediate – I did not have to struggle to achieve what only God can do.'

To read more testimonies like this or share your own, visit: [biblesociety.org.uk/passiton2018](http://biblesociety.org.uk/passiton2018)

# Morocco

*'I will make rivers flow among barren hills and springs of water run in the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water and the dry land into flowing springs.'*

Isaiah 41.18 (GNB)

## Factfile



Area – 446,550 sq km, approx. 1.83x as large as UK

Population – 34 million, approx. 52% of UK

Literacy rate – 68.5%

Languages – Arabic (official), Berber languages, French

Look out for your next *Bible a Month* prayer letter featuring reports from Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Thank you for your support which is bringing the Bible to life at home and around the world.

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